

Most local pet shops selling hamsters may resume business tomorrow

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (January 29) announced that most local pet shops selling hamsters may resume business from tomorrow (January 30).

An AFCD spokesman said, "In view of the fact that samples of hamsters collected from a pet shop tested positive for the COVID-19 virus earlier on, the AFCD announced a series of anti-epidemic measures to minimise the potential risks of COVID-19 infection and safeguard public health. One of which is that all pet shops in Hong Kong selling hamsters must suspend business. Hamsters from those pet shops would be taken for the COVID-19 virus test and humane dispatch, while other animals of those pet shops would also need to undergo tests until they passed. The pet shops must be thoroughly disinfected and cleaned and environmental swabs taken from the shops must pass the virus test before they can resume business."

"The AFCD has taken 1 134 samples from animals other than hamsters including rabbits, chinchillas and others; and 1 124 environmental swabs from all the concerned pet shops for the COVID-19 virus test. Test results of all the animal samples are confirmed negative. However, the 'Little Boss' pet shop in Jardine's Bazaar, Causeway Bay, has not yet been thoroughly disinfected and cleaned while some of the environmental swabs taken in the following pet shops, namely 'I Love Rabbit' in Lee Garden Road, Causeway Bay; 'Little Boss' in Tung Choi Street, Mong Kok and 'I Love Rabbit' in Kau Yuk Road, Yuen Long have not passed the virus test. Another 'I Love Rabbit' pet shop in Tung Choi Street is still under the investigation of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health. All the other concerned pet shops, on the other hand, have been thoroughly disinfected and cleaned and the environmental swabs collected from these shops have all passed the COVID-19 virus test. Therefore, the department has allowed these pet shops, other than the five mentioned above, to resume business from tomorrow," the spokesman further said.

The AFCD will step up surveillance of those pet shops to ensure public health.